

Having seen the six proposals before the FCC I find myself agreeing most with RM-10784, submitted by Mr. Reich. I agree that the requirement to demonstrate a working knowledge of Morse code should be removed to access the Amateur frequencies below 30 MHz, but that Element 1 of the Amateur test should remain in place for those seeking an upgrade to the Amateur Extra class.

I do think, however, that the FCC should also do away with the Novice and Technician Plus licenses, combining them into the single Technician license. This “new” Technician will have all the privileges of the current Technician with Element 1 credit (Tech Plus). Those now holding Novice or Technician Plus licenses would receive the new Technician class upon renewal.

There is currently a way for Technician class operators to operate in the HF spectrum without a Morse code requirement. Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) licensees are currently required to “possess a valid amateur radio license at the level of Technician Class or above, issued by the Federal Communications Commission”; “possess an operation station capable of operating on a minimum of two MARS frequencies within the 2-30 MHz range”; and “agree to operate... on established Region/State HF nets.” There is no requirement that the MARS operator demonstrate Morse code proficiency to the FCC or any other ruling body. MARS stations under Military Auspices “are encouraged to maintain a valid amateur radio license”, but that “an amateur radio license is not required for MARS affiliation.”

Mr. Reich has the right idea as to keeping the code requirement for advancement to Amateur Extra. It shows that the applicant is willing to “go the extra mile” to upgrade to the top class. There are many General and Advance operators who did not upgrade to Amateur Extra when the code requirement dropped to 5 WPM across the board. I don’t think requiring Element 1 will keep any of the future Technician or General operators from taking that final step to become an Amateur Extra.

Removing the code requirement for General and Technician class licensees will be a good thing for Amateur Radio. Allowing Technicians to obtain Technician Plus status will give them full access to VHF, UHF and SHF, and an opportunity to “get their feet wet” in the HF bands. General class operators will be just that, general operators with general operating privileges across the frequency spectrum. Keeping the code requirement for Amateur Extra will truly make them the “Extra-class operators” of Amateur Radio.

Respectfully submitted,

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